County Louth Archaeological and History Society

The Ancient Territories of Oirghialla, Uladh and Conaille Muirthemhne

Author(s): Laurence P. Murray

Source: *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Dec., 1912), pp. 52-65

Published by: [County Louth Archaeological and History Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27727967>

Accessed: 30/03/2013 13:16

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

County Louth Archaeological and History Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

The Ancient Territories of Oirghialla, Uladh and Conaille Muirthemhne.

THE assumption by the Committee of Dundalk Bazaar (1912) of the name "Oriël" has been the occasion of a number of serious errors concerning the extent of the ancient territory of Oirghialla.¹ It has been freely stated in our newspapers that from early ages up to the coming of the Norman, Louth was part of the territory ruled directly by the king of Oirghialla. The responsibility for this error rests, partly on O'Donovan, who, without any proof, stated in several of his works, that "Oirghialla seems to have comprised the counties of Louth, Armagh, Monaghan and the greater part of Fermanagh," and, partly on medieval English writers with whom it was the custom to regard "Uriel" as a synonym for Louth. From the examination of ancient documents which will be quoted in the course of this article, it is evident that Louth neither formed part of Oirghialla, nor was in any way tributary to the king of that territory.

The ancient inhabitants of Ulster,² the Ruricians or Clanna Rudhraighe,³ were in 332 driven by the three Collas into the eastern part of the province, and the Clanna Colla became rulers of the remainder. The restricted kingdom of the old inhabitants, thenceforward known as Uladh,⁴ was bounded on the west by the Bann, Lough Neagh, and the Newry River—in other words, it was the territory included in the modern counties of Down and Antrim. About the beginning of the fifth century, the Clann Colla or Oirghialla were in turn driven out of the counties of Tyrone and Derry by the Hy Neill, so that, from that time forward, Ulster was divided into three great territories—Aileach, Oirghialla and Uladh, governed by three chief kings each independent of the other. To which of these kingdoms was Louth or Conaille Muirthemhne subject, and by which race was the territory inhabited? The purpose of this paper is to show that the inhabitants of Conaille⁵ Muirthemhne were not the Oirghialla, but the ancient Ruricians, who, while they acknowledged a kind of *de jure* suzerainty in the King of Uladh as the head of the ancient race, and while they allied themselves with their kinsmen of Uladh in the common fight against the hated Oirghialla, were practically a free people governed

by an independent king. Conaille Muirthemhne is generally said to have been coterminous with the present County Louth.⁶ This is only roughly true; the barony of Ferrard must be excluded from the territory, as well as the small portion of West Louth in the territory of the Fir Rois. It would be difficult to point out its exact limits, but whatever may have been its extent, it is easy to show that it never belonged to the kingdom of Oirghialla.

I.—THE CONAILLI OF THE SAME RACE AS THE ULAIÐ.

The ancient inhabitants of Ulster, the Clanna Rudhraighe, were really composed of two races, the Cruithentuath⁷ (Cruithni or Picts), and the Dal Fiatach.⁸ This fact can easily be proved from the Tales of the Red Branch Cycle, and from the genealogies in the Books of Leinster, Ballymote, &c. The exemption of Cu-chullain from the curse pronounced upon the Ultonians is explained by the fact that, unlike the other Red Branch heroes, he belonged, not to the Dal Fiatach, but to the Cruithni. The Cruithentuath, a general name for the ancient Picts, was specially applied to the people of Dalaradia and Conaille Muirthemhne. The Dal Araidi occupied central Down and portion of Antrim. In an old Trinity College manuscript we have a passage of which the following is a translation :—

“With the Gaels are twelve noble septs, six of them in Conn’s half—the Dal Cuind, Dal Cein, Dal n Araide who are Picts, Dal Fiatach who are the Ulaid, the Dal Riata and the Dal nat Corp who are Leinstermen.”

Here the distinction is drawn between the Picts of Dalaradia and the Dal Fiatach, “who are the Ulaid.” The fact, however, that the Picts were not true Ulaid, just as much as the Dal Fiatach is contradicted in the Genealogies from the Book of Ballymote :—

“The true Ulaid are the Dal n Araidi—in Conall Cernach they originate, and in Iriel Glunmar in the genealogy of Dal Araidhe.”

Up to the eighth century the Annals always refer to the Dalaraidhe as Cruithni or Picts, and many of the “kings of the Cruithni” were also “kings of Uladh.” The “Chronicles of the Picts and Scots” tell us that the kings of the Cruithni ruled over Uladh alternately with the kings of the Dal Fiatach. All these quotations go to prove that the Ulaid were really composed of two races.

The people of Conaille Muirthemhne belonged to the same Pictish race as the Dalaraidhi. In the “Genealogies of Mac Firbis” there is a quotation from an earlier writer :—

“Do Cruithnib Ereann do Dhal Araidhe, na seacht Laighsi Laighen 7 seacht Soghain Ereann 7 gach Conaille fil in Ereann,” i.e., “To the Irish Picts belong the Dal Araidhe, the seven Soghain of Erin, the seven Laighsi of Leinster and EVERY CONAILLE IN ERIN.”

In the “Book of Ballymote” two different genealogies of the Conailli are given. One of these makes them descended from Conall Aughonnach¹⁰ son of Finn Mac Finnlogha, uncle of Queen Maeve and brother of Eochaidh Feidhleach and of Eochaidh Aireamb, both kings of Ireland during the century before the Christian era. According to the other account, the Conailli were descended from Conall Cosdamail, a direct descendant of Conall Cernach, the famous Red Branch hero, who, according to the “Book of Lecan,” was the eponymous ancestor of all the Conailli as well as the Dal Araidhi. In the “Book of Lecan” we are also told that the “Cland Chonaill Chearnaigh” or descendants of Conall Cearnach extended from

G

"Carraic Indbeir Uisci to Linn Duachail"—that is, from Island Magee to Annagasson. In the "Book of Ballymote" there is mention of Rath Cathbaid in Cruithentuath¹¹ "close to the river Concobur in Crich Rois." Cruithentuath in this context can refer only to Co. Louth. Other authorities might be quoted⁹ in support of the assertion that the Conailli belonged to the same race as the Cruithni of Dalaraidhe, but those given are sufficient.

A strong negative argument is supplied from the Genealogies of the Thirteen Tribes of the Oirghialla in the "Book of Ballymote," where no mention is made of the Conailli. The Oirghialla are all descended from the three sons of Eochu Doimlen—Colla da Crioch, Colla Uais, and Colla Mend. The thirteen tribes are as follows :—

- I. The Ui Tuitre (Settled around Lough Neagh).
- II. Hui Echach (Bar. of Armagh).
- III. Hui Breasail¹² (Clanbrassil, Co. Armagh).
- IV. Hui Sinaig (In Leinster).
- V. Hua Niallain (Oneilland, Co. Armagh).
- VI. Hui Cruind (Orior, Co. Armagh).
- VII. Hui Meith (Tullycorbett and Kilmore, Co. Monaghan).
- VIII. Hui Segain (Near Ardracran, Co. Meath).
- IX. Hui Maicc Cairthinn (Bar. of Tirkeeran, Co. Derry).
- X. Hui Fiacrach (Ardstraw, Co. Tyrone ; afterwards near Sliabh Fuait).
- XI. Hui Maine (Extensive kingdom in Galway and Roscommon).
- XII. Hui Duach (Sept of the Ui Maine).
- XIII. Ui Cormaic Maenmaige (Near Loughrea).

Their genealogies can be seen at a glance from the genealogical table opposite. From them descended the MacMahons, Maguires, O'Carrolls, MacManuses, O'Hanlons, MacDonalds and MacRories, but it is clear that between them and the Conailli there was no kinship.

II.—THE CONAILLI, A FREE PEOPLE IN ALLIANCE WITH ULADH.

We now come to the second portion of our argument, that Louth or Conaille Muirthemhne was not tributary to Oirghialla, but that the Conailli were practically a free people in alliance with Uladh. The Book of Fenagh gives the following list of districts in the Kingdom of Oirghialla :—

- I. Ui Niallain (Oneilland, Co. Armagh).
- II. Ui Breasail (Clanbrassil, Co. Armagh).
- III. Ui Echach (In Bar. of Armagh—to be distinguished from Iveagh, Co. Down).
- IV. Ui Meith Macha (Tullycorbett, Tyholland and Kilmore, Co. Monaghan).
- V. Ui Tortain (Meath, around Kells).
- VI. Ui Briuin Archail (Bar. Dungannon).
- VII. Tri Tuatha (Around Lough Neagh).
- VIII. Dartraige (Bar. Dartrey, Co. Monaghan).
- IX. Feara-managh (Fermanagh).
- X. Fernmagh, Mugdorn and Ros (Farney, Cremorne, and Fir Rois, Co. Mon.).

EOCHU DOIMLEN.

It is to be noted, that if we omit the three tribes who migrated to Connaught, this list corresponds roughly with that already given of the tribes of the Oirghialla. The only part of Co. Louth included in this summary is that small portion of West Louth in the Fir Rois territory, at present contained in the parish of Killanny. The description of Oirghialla from the "Battle of Magh Rath" is just as conclusive:—

"Oirghialla extended from Ath an Imaig (probably on the Lower Bann) to the Finn, and from Glenn Righe (Newry River) westward directly to Bearramain in Breffney."

The strongest testimony of all is that contained in the "Book of Rights." This treatise is so important for our purpose, that a few words concerning its authorship and contents will not be considered out of place. Begun by St. Benignus, it underwent many changes at different periods, and, as is clear from internal evidence, was compiled in its present form during the reign of Brian Borumha. Thus, while it is a witness of the state of affairs in Ireland during the tenth century, it also, owing to the various changes which it underwent, combines many of the traditions of other ages. It gives an account of the Rights and Duties of the Ard-ri and provincial kings, of the taxes levied on inferior chieftains, and of the stipends paid to the latter for military services. The account is chiefly in verse, but each poem is introduced by a prose statement, and of these joint pieces, twenty-one in number, six are devoted to Ulster, two to each of the aforementioned divisions of the province. The four pieces dealing with Oirghialla and Uladh are of the greatest interest. The following is the list of kings who paid tribute to the king of Oirghialla, and who received stipends for military services:—

The King of Ui Neillain.	The King of Ui Tuitre.
" " " Ui Breasail.	" " " Leithrinn.
" " " Ui Eachach.	" " " Dartraighe.
" " " Ui Meith Macha.	" " " Fearnmhagh.
" " " Ui Dortain.	" " " Mughdhorn and Ros.
" " " Ui Bruin Archoill.	

It is to be noted that there is only one change from the list in the Book of Fenagh, and that Conaille Muirthemhne is not mentioned in this summary.

In the two poems relating to the "Rights and Duties of the King of Uladh," the list of kings who paid tribute is different from the list of those who received pay for rendering military service. The former appear under the column marked A, the latter under B.

A	B
LIST OF TERRITORIES WHOSE KINGS PAID TRIBUTE TO ULADH.	TERRITORIES WHOSE KINGS RECEIVED STIPEND FOR MILITARY SERVICE.
I. Magh Line (Moylinny, Co. Antrim).	I. Dalaraidhe (Co. Down).
II. Dalraida (East Antrim).	II. Dalriada.
III. Latharna (Larne).	III. Oirthear.
IV. Cotraidhe (Bar. Carey, Co. Antrim).	IV. Ui Dearca Cein (Same as Breadach).
V. Breadach (Bar. of Antrim).	V. Dal Buinne (Bar. of Massereene).
VI. Fortuatha (non-Ulidian races).	VI. Arda (The Ards).
VII. Magh Semne (in Dalriada).	VII. Ui Blathmaic (in the Ards).
VIII. Dubhthrian (Dufferin, Co. Antrim).	VIII. Duibhthrian.
IX. Leath Chathail (Lecale, Co. Down).	IX. Leath Chathail.
	X. Boirche (Mourne).
	XI. Cobha (Iveagh, South Down).
	XII. CONAILLE MUIRTHEMHNE.

The territory of Magh Muirthemhne appears on the list of those which rendered military service, but not in the first list. From this it is clear the King of Muirth-

emhne was in the Ulidian Confederacy, but, like the King of Dalaraidhe, who usually was chief-king of Uladh, he was regarded more as an ally than as a sub-king. The stipend due to the king of Muirthemhne from the king of Uladh is related in the following verse :—

Ólígíro rí Muirthemhne in mino
Se cuirp leabha lán do lino
Deic longá do laeó Elga
Deic neic, deic n-inair deapá.

TRANSLATION :

The Right of the heroic king of Muirthemhne
Six large goblets full of ale
Ten ships from the hero of Elga
Ten steeds, ten red cloaks.

The king of Uladh was called the hero of Elga, because, as chief-king of the Ruricians, and especially of Cuailgne¹³ (Cooley), he was regarded as the representative of the great Cuchullain. Elsewhere in the Tract, he is called “King of Cuailgne.” In telling of the stipend due to him from the Ard-righ, the poem says :—

I r h-é rín tuairteal tair
Ólígear rí Cuailgne céadais
Cac tpear bliadán—ní báir baet
O rí fíorla na bfiar fírae.

and again, in summing up his tributes from the sub-kings of his own province, it says :—

Seandair rí Cuailgne ír boirce
Cuirníg cac lá ír cac n-oirce.

From these two verses it is clear that one of the hereditary titles of the king of Uladh was “King of Cuailgne.” O'Donovan has the following amusing note on these two latter verses :—“‘King of Cuailgne’ is another name for the King of Uladh, for that mountainous region (Cooley) at the period of this poem was included in his kingdom, although several centuries before the English invasion it was wrested from him by the vigorous Clann Colla.” O'Donovan evidently forgot that, in his own preface, he had told us that the poem, in its present form, was compiled not earlier than the eleventh century—and the English invasion was in the twelfth !

A portion of the Book of Rights is devoted to the Rights of the Kingdom of Munster whenever Cashel happened to be the seat of the Ard-Righ. This can only refer to the reign of Brian Borumha, and it is therefore interesting tenth century evidence of the position of the different kingdoms. We know that Brian actually made a tour around Ireland, and, in all probability, the following laws are based upon what really happened :—

“It is the right of the King of Cashel to receive a month's entertainment at Eamhain (Armagh) from the Oirghialla, and then to be escorted by them eastwards to the Ulidians. To the King of Cashel is due two months' refecton from the Ulidians at Tulach-chearnaigh, and then to be escorted by them to Tara.” If Conaille Muirthemhne had been occupied at this time by the Oirghialla, the Ulidians would scarcely have been expected, or permitted, to escort the High King from Tullycarney in Co. Down to Tara in Co. Meath.

There is another tract entitled *Seapá asur buaóa Ríog Éireann*—“The Restrictions and Prerogatives of the Kings of Erin,” which is usually prefixed to the Book of Rights. It was written in the eleventh century by Con O Leochain, chief poet, and, for a time, Regent of Ireland. Among the five prerogatives of the

King of Uladh were the following :—“ *To attend with his fleet the games of Cuailgne, and to muster his host on the plain of Muirthemhne.*” Amongst his prohibitions was one concerning the celebration of the feast of the rough-brown bull of Daire mac Daire—an old Cooley feast in commemoration of Daire’s refusal to give the Brown Bull to Maeve. These prerogatives show that Muirthemhne acknowledged some nominal allegiance to the King of Uladh.

Donald Mac Firbis, the seventeenth century author of the greatest book of genealogies ever written, gives the territory of Oirghialla as follows :—

Ui Tuitre (in Tyrone).
 Ui Fiachrach Finn (along River Derg).
 Farney (Co. Monaghan).
 Magh Leamhna (around Blackwater, Co. Tyrone).
 Mughdorna (Cremorne).
 Oirtheara (Oriors, Co. Armagh).
 Feara Rois (Fir Rois).
 Ui Meith Macha (between Ballybay and Monaghan).
 Clann Ceallaigh (Clankelly, Co. Fermanagh).
 Dartrey (Co. Monaghan).
 Ui Laeghaire (bar. Lurg, Co. Tyrone).
 Clann Fearghaile (Co. Longford).
 Tuathratha (Tourah, Co. Fermanagh).
 Muintir Pheodachain (in Co. Fermanagh).
 Cladach (Truagh, Co. Monaghan).
 Ui Breasail of Macha (Clanbrasil).
 Ui Eathach (Bar. of Armagh).
 Little Modarn (Mughdhorna Bregb=North Meath and South Monaghan).
 Feara Monach (Fermanagh).
 Ui Seghain (in Co. Meath).

The extent of territory here represented will be found to coincide substantially with what has been described in the earlier documents. To Uladh he apportions the following territories :—

Iveagh Cobha (South Down).
 Clann Aedha (MacGuinness territory on Carlingford Lough).
 Kinel Faghartaigh (East Down).
 Kinel Awley (Parish of Magherawley).
 Clann Breasail (Co. Antrim).
 Dal Cuirb (in Co. Down).

He makes no mention of the tribes of Muirthemhne who had already been swept away by the Normans, but in bidding adieu to Uladh, he includes Cooley in his valedictory :—

Let us pass from flaky Boirche
 And from Cooley of the winding territory (Cuailgne Ćruic leandais).
 From Magh Rath of fierce contention
 And from the hero battalions of O Labradha.

III.—PLACE NAMES.

If we had to depend solely on the lists of the place names apportioned to the different territories, we could make a strong case against the inclusion of Conaille in the Kingdom of Oirghialla. Although, in all the ancient documents, at least forty place names are mentioned as belonging to Oirghialla, not a County Louth name appears among them. The following entry from the Annals of Ulster is the only one which would seem to substantiate O'Donovan's contention:—"The Cenel nEogain went to Ath Firdiad in aid of the Oirghialla." It is not here stated that Ardee was in Oirghialla, and in any case, as Ardee was on the border of Fir Rois, the quotation proves nothing. Of over a hundred County Louth place names whose territories are given, the southern ones are usually placed in Ferrard or Magh Breh, while over fifty North Louth place names are credited to Conaille and Magh Muirthemhne. From time to time North Louth place names appear in Magh Breh,¹⁴ while to the Kingdom of Uladh are given Casan Linne (Annagasson), Daire Dachonna (Dysart, bar. Ferrard), and, strange to say, Cell Sleibe (Killeevy, Co. Armagh). I would like to give a table of all these place names with their territories, together with the authorities for each insertion, but, unfortunately, the paper would far exceed the limits allowed for it.

THE "DANE'S CAST."

There is a vast entrenchment, known in various places as the "Dane's Cast," the "Valley of the Black Pig," the "Worm Ditch" and "Duncladh," extending through the counties of Antrim, Down, Armagh, Louth and Monaghan. Westropp has the following description of it: "It commences at a stream between the townlands of Lisnagade and Scarva. In Scarva it consists of two mounds, forty feet apart, with fosses eight feet wide and six feet deep; the mounds four feet above the fields and measuring 54 feet over all. Fortified on the east side by a low wall, it ends near Lough Shark on the border of Armagh. It reappears to the south of the lake and continues past Poyntzpass to a drained lake. The "Cast" next passes into Armagh, turning westward. It reappears to the south of Camlough, to the west of Newry and then it curves past the lake and mountain, near the border of Armagh and Louth, some 16 or 18 miles in all. O'Donovan thought that he had found other traces at Carrickmacross in Monaghan, and northwards in Farney, and that 'Worm Ditch' and 'Duncladh' were portions of it; but this theory would imply field works, 50 to 100 miles in length, and would necessitate a belief in such persistency of purpose in a transparently useless work, as would certainly be more characteristic of the Chinese than the Irish. The 'Cast' is locally attributed to the Black Pig, which not only threw up trenches, but excavated whole valleys in Ulidia."

Local tradition supports O'Donovan against Westropp. Nowhere in the story of the Black Pig told so vividly as it is around the firesides in Farney. It is also certainly true that traces of the Black Pig's Dyke are still to be found throughout Monaghan. From Camlough it runs, as stated by Westropp, to Meigh whence it strikes across the Moyry Pass around the eastern foot of Sliabh Gullion. From that point it runs in partly obliterated segments to Carrickmacross, and southwards in a straight line to Bellahoe Lake.

O'Donovan and other antiquarians have told us that it was built by the three Collas after the battle of Achadh Leith Dearg in 332, to confine the Ruricians in the territory into which they had been driven. O'Donovan finds documentary evidence

for this opinion in an old Trinity College manuscript, which has the following :—
 “On the hither side of Glenn Righe (i.e., the Newry River) the boundary of Glenn Righe was formed, from Newry upwards between them (the Clann Colla and the Clanna Rudraighe) and the Clanna Rudhraighe never returned across it.”

By including Louth in the territory of Oirghialla, O'Donovan weakened the force of his argument concerning the Worm Ditch, and supplied more recent writers with a strong objection to the theory. By placing Louth in the Ulidian Alliance, we remove this objection, and O'Donovan's opinion has received further confirmation from the fact that the entrenchment can be traced still further around the border of Oirghialla—from Bellahoe to Clones. The so-called ‘Dane's Cast,’ begun for the purpose of keeping back the Ultonians, was evidently extended to guard the whole kingdom of Oirghialla against all possible invaders. On the east side the kingdom was protected by the Upper Bann, Lough Neagh, and the Lower Bann. Then the Dane's Cast commencing between Scarva and Lisnagade extends southwards to Newry. Passing into Armagh, it touches Camlough, runs through the plain of Meigh,¹⁵ and crosses the Moyry Pass to the east of Sliabh Gullion. Thence the partly defaced sections still to be seen of its southward course from Carrickmacross to Bellahoe Lake, and of its northward course from Bellahoe to Clones coincide with the boundaries of the baronies of Farney and Dartrey. Beyond Clones it extends to Wattle Bridge in Co. Fermanagh, and from that to the sea at Bundoran, its place is taken by Lower and Upper Lough Erne. The territory included by this boundary corresponds exactly with the territory of Oirghialla, already described from the “Book of Rights,” the “Book of Ballymote” and the “Book of Fenagh,” and the existence of this fortification is another proof of the exclusion of Louth from the kingdom of Oirghialla.

V.—HISTORY OF CONAILLE, WITH CHRONOLOGICAL AND GENEALOGICAL TABLES OF CHIEFS.

The history of Conaille Muirthemhne can easily be pieced together from the many entries in the annals concerning this territory, and it shows beyond even the shadow of doubt that Louth owed no allegiance to Oirghialla. It is surprising that O'Donovan, who, as editor of the “Annals of the Four Masters” had an intimate knowledge of all the books of annals, could have fallen into so grievous an error. How can one who holds that Conaille was part of Oirghialla explain the many entries of which the following are but a few examples :—

A.D. 998.—Battle between the Oirghialla and the Conailli, in which fell Giolla Christ O'Cuileannan lord of Conaille and many others.

A.D. 1042.—A preying expedition by the Oirghialla into Conaille, but the Conailli routed them at Magh da Channech.

1087.—Ua Baoigheallain lord of Oirghialla fell in battle with the Conailli.

1093.—Aedh Ua Baoigheallain, lord of Oirghialla, slain by the Conailli.

A still stronger argument is supplied by the lists of the kings of the two territories, which extend in unbroken succession from the sixth century up to the century of the Norman conquest. Sometimes these kings were at war with each other, less frequently they formed an alliance against the Danes, the Hy Niall or the Bregians, but never, in the annals, is there a suggestion that between the two there existed

the relationship of lord and vassal. The two lists are compiled chiefly from the "Annals of the Four Masters":—

TABLE OF KINGS

OIRGHIALLA.				CONAILLE MUIRTHEMHNE.			
Cairpre Daimhin Airtit	died A.D.	513		Uaircridhe Ua Oisene	died A.D.	686	
Conall Derg ..	..	?		Awley Mac Casey ..	..	736	
Colga ..	..	520		Foidmeann Mac Fallach ..	..	747	
St. Enda ..	..	?		Uargal ..	..	760	
Beg Mac Cooney ..	..	594		Slowey ..	..	784	
Aedh Mac Colgan ..	..	606		Fiachain ..	..	787	
Maelodhar ..	..	636		Spelan I. ..	..	822	
Donnchadh ..	..	675		Maelbrihte I. ..	..	867	
Maelforthartaigh ..	..	695		Garvey ..	..	875	
Cumascach ..	..	825		Gibhleacan ..	..	886	
Godfrey ..	..	835		Maelmordha ..	..	887	
Fogartach I. ..	..	850		Conghalach I. ..	..	906	
Maelcanrarda ..	..	851		Domhnall ..	..	910	
Conghalach ..	..	874		Maelbrihte II. ..	..	911	
Maelfadraig ..	..	882		Spelan II. ..	..	921	
Maelcraoibhe ..	..	917		Croinghilla ..	..	935	
Fogartach II. ..	..	947		Maceitigh ..	..	949	
Machleighbinn ..	..	1022		Cinaedh ..	..	976	
Cathalan Ua Crichan ..	..	1027		Conghalach II. ..	..	987	
Gilla Coluim Ua h-Eignigh ..	..	1048		Matudan ..	..	995	
Ua Baoigheallain ..	..	1087		Gillachrist ..	..	998	
Aedh Ua Baoirgeallain ..	..	1093		Muireadhaigh ..	..	1004	
O Hanvey ..	..	1095		Ingeirci ..	..	1004	
Flann O Hanvey ..	..	1096		Crinan ..	..	1012	
Cu-uladh Ua Ceileachain ..	..	1096		Cinaedh ..	..	1029	
Ruadhri Ua Ruadhagain ..	..	1099		Ua Treodain ..	..	1078	
Cucaisil Ua Cearbhaill ..	..	1123		Mac Angheirrce ..	..	1081	
Donough Ua Cearbhaill ..	..	1169		Fergus ..	..	1107	
Murrough Ua Cearbhaill ..	..	1189					
O'Carroll, lord of Oirghialla (hanged by the English) ..	..	1194					

A comparison of these two lists leads us to certain conclusions. Between 695 and 825 there is a break in the Oirghialla succession, and from other sources we know that during that period the people of the territory acknowledged the suzerainty of the Cinel n Eogain. The list of Kings of Conaille remains unbroken during the same period. From Slowey or Sluaigheadhaigh, who died in 784, all the kings of Conaille trace their descent, as is shown in the appended genealogical table, compiled from the "Annals of the Four Masters.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE CHIEFS OF CONAILLE MUIRTHEMHNE.

I had not sufficient time at my disposal to transcribe from the "Book of Ballymote" the genealogical table which shows the descent of the Kings of Conaille from Conal Cearnach. It will also be noted that, at least in the eleventh century, the kingship of Oirghialla was not hereditary, but the prize of the most powerful member of the Confederacy. It was held successively by O Crichan of Farney, O Hegny of Fermanagh, O Boylan of Dartrey, O Hanvey of Omeath Tire, O'Callaghan of Ard Macha, O Rogan of Clanbrassil and O Carroll of Farney. Some of these were "Kings with Opposition." Flann O Hanvey, who died in 1096, was "King of South Oirghialla," and Rory O Rogan, who died in 1099, was "King of East Oirghialla."

VI.—DONOUGH O'CARROLL.

In his edition of the "Battle of Magh Rath," O'Donovan says: "The principal families of the Oirghialla were the O'Carrolls, MacMahons, O'Hanlons, Maguires, O'Hanrattys, MacKennas, &c.; their country comprised the present counties of Louth, Armagh, Monaghan and the greater part of Fermanagh." O'Donovan's claim that Louth formed part of Oirghialla is based on the supposed fact that it formed part of O'Carroll's territory. Both the premises and the conclusion must be denied. In the first place, the kingship of Oirghialla, as has been already shown, so far from being hereditary in the O'Carroll family, was held by the most powerful prince in the Confederacy. Secondly, the appearance of the O'Carroll family in the politics of Oirghialla was comparatively recent. Before the eleventh century the O'Crichans and the O'Donegans were lords of Farney, and the first mention of an O'Carroll was as late as the year 1043. From that time forward, however, successive members of the family assumed greater power at the expense of neighbouring princes, until, during the twelfth century, they were undisputed kings of Oirghialla. Forty years before the coming of the Norman they would seem to have taken advantage of the temporary weakness of the Conailli and to have annexed portion of their territory. Even this much is not very clear, but there are facts mentioned in the annals which lead us to the conclusion that Donough O'Carroll, the last pre-Norman king of Oirghialla, had possession of a large portion of West Louth. The following eleventh and twelfth century entries from the "Annals of the Four Masters" will explain the position of affairs more clearly than I could hope to do:—

998.—Battle between the Oirghialla and Conailli, in which fell Gilla Christ Ua Cuileanain, lord of Conaille and many others.

1004.—Muireadhaigh, lord of Conaille, slain by the Mughdorna (an Oirghialla clan).

1004.—Ingeirci, lord of Conaille, slain.

1012.—Crinan, lord of Conaille, slain by Cucuailgne.

1013.—Great depredation upon the Conailli by Maelseachlain king of Meath.

1029.—Donnchadh Ua Donnaghan, lord of Fearnmhagh (Farney) and Cinaedh son of Angeirce lord of Conaille slain by each other.

1042.—A preying expedition by the Oirghialla into Conaille, but the Conailli routed them at Magh da Chainnech.

1048.—Predatory expedition by Leathlobhar son of Laidhgmen, lord of Oirghialla.

1078.—Slaughter of the Conailli by the Ui Meath (another Oirghialla clan), and the son of Ua Treodain, lord of Conaille, was slain.

1081.—Mac Angheirce, lord of Conaille, slain by the men of Farney.

1084.—Donal O Lochlainn, lord of Cinel n Eogain, took the men of Farney into his pay, and preyed on the Conailli.

1087.—Ua Baoigheallain, lord of Oirghialla, slain by the the Conailli.

1089.—Predatory expedition by Donal O Maeleachlin as far as Newry; he plundered the men of Farney, Conaille, Mughdorna and Ui Meith, and burned all Conaille.

1093.—Aodh Ua Baoigheallain, lord of Oirghialla, slain by Conailli.

1100.—A great army of Leinstermen burned Oirghialla, Ui Meith and Fir Rois.

1101.—Cucasil O Carroll became lord of Farney and Oirghialla.

1107.—Conor, son of Donlevey, royal heir of Uladh, was slain by the men of Farney. A battle was gained by the Ui Breasail Macha (Oirghiallians) over the Ui Meith, in which the latter were slaughtered, and Fergus son of the chief of Conaille was slain.

1123.—Cucasil O'Carroll, king of Oirghialla died.

1125.—Murtough O Carroll, lord of South Farney, slain.

1133.—Donough O Carroll king of Oirghialla.

1138.—O Carroll, king of Oirghialla, formed a league with O Ruairc king of Breffney and O Connor king of Connaught.

1148.—Donough O Carroll assisted at the opening of the new churches of Louth and Cnoc na Seangan.

1173.—The Normans took possession of Louth.

1189.—Murrough O Carroll, lord of Oirghialla, died a sincere penitent in the great monastery of Mellifont.

1194.—O Carroll, lord of Oirghialla, taken by the English, who first put out his eyes and then hanged him.

The last mention in the Annals of a chief of Conaille is at the year 1107. During the whole period of the preceding century Louth had been constantly subjected to the attacks of the neighbouring chieftains. In the meantime the power of the O'Carrolls of Farney had grown to such an extent that they were able to impose their dominion on all the other Oirghialla chiefs, and in 1138, were deemed powerful enough to enter into an alliance with the O Connors of Connaught and O Rourkes of Breffney. The weakening of the Conailli through the successive and sometimes combined attacks of the Hy Neill, the Ulidians, the Bregians and the various chiefs of the Oirghialla Confederacy, and the absence of the name of a chief of Conaille during the last part of the twelfth century, combined with the fact that in 1148 Donough O Carroll built the new abbeys of Mellifont and Cnoc na Seangan, and restored the old abbeys of Louth and Termonfeckin—all these point to the conclusion that at least the western portion of Conaille had fallen under the power of the O Carrolls. That this brief and temporary conquest of Louth did not destroy the distinctive character of the territory and the people is clear from an entry in the Annals as late as 1154, which groups the Conailli, not with the subordinate clans of Oirghialla, but with the independent kingdoms of the North:—

1154.—*O Lochlan, during his famous expedition, billeted the Munstermen on the men of Meath, Breifne, Oirghialla, Ulidia, Conaille and Tireoghain.*

LAURENCE P. MURRAY.

NOTES.

1.—The older and more correct spelling is Airgialla. The form Oirgialla is found in the *Vita Tripartita*. The spelling used throughout this paper—Oirghialla—is found in the “Annals of the Four Masters,” and is now commonly used. The name describes both the territory and the people. Oirghiall, Oriel, and Uriel are corruptions.

2.—Ancient Ulster included Louth or Conaille.

3.—So called from Rudhraighe, a famous prehistoric king of Uladh.

4.—The forms Uladh and Ulath are from the “Annals of Ulster.” The older spelling was Ulaid, a form used in later times to describe the people of the territory. It is probably the same as Ptolemy’s *Oonolountioi*.

5.—The form Conaille is the oldest existing manuscript form. The nominative plural, Conailli, is sometimes used to describe the people of the territory. John MacNeill gives the form Cunavali from an Ogham inscription in the Isle of Man, but gives no proof of any connection between the two names.

6.—In the *Journal* for 1910, page 216, I described the limits of the Fir Rois territory in Louth.

7.—Tibraide Tireach, one of the three who escaped from the massacre of the nobility by the Aitheach Tuatha or Attacotti in A.D. 10, became king of East Ulster and the eponymous ancestor of the Dalaraidi. He escaped in the womb of his mother, Aine, daughter of the King of the Picts and Saxons, and on account of her nationality his descendants were called Cruithne or Picts. The theory of Windisch that they were Cymric Celts is without any foundation.

8.—Descendants of Fiatach Finn, first King of Ulster (A.D. 24-40) and second High-king of Erin (38-40) after the restoration of the legitimate dynasty.

9.—Vide ‘*Trias Thaumaturga*,’ 3rd Life; O’Flaherty’s ‘*Ogygia*’ 189; ‘*Book of Lismore*’ 7a; ‘*Book of Leinster*’ 330a; ‘*Book of Lecan*’ 140.

10.—Vide *Book of Leinster*, p. 124b.

11.—Vide *Revue Celtique* VI., 175.

12.—This territory is described in the *L.A.J.* 1908, p. 59.

13.—Now represented, at least in name, by the parish of Cooley. In the time of Cuchullin it extended to the Castletown river (The Crond). It appears to have been included in Muirthemhne, but not in Conaille Muirthemhne. John MacNeill’s suggestion, that it was the same name as Conaille, cannot be entertained.

14.—For the description of Magh Breagh, see *L.A.J.*, 1910, p. 275.

15.—Meigh = *Magh an chosnumaigh* of Keating (*History of Ireland*, 121b), i.e., “The Plain of the Defender.” It would be interesting to know the historical associations connected with this name. The fact that, just at this point, on the Oirghialla side, there is a strong extensive secondary fortified encampment known as the Dorsey, proves, if proof were needed, that the Worm Ditch was a defence of Oirghialla, not of Bregia nor of Ulidia.

LAURENCE P. MURRAY.